

Brian Redman is delivered safely for Shelby Cup practice



GOODWOOD'S FINEST TAXI SERVICE

You'll never guess who **Colin Goodwin** had in the back of his cab the other day...

There are just minutes to go before practice for the Goodwood Revival Cobra race and we have the only rain shower of the day. Lord March, who has connections the rest of us can only dream of, has as usual tweaked the weather for the event and it's a near-perfect September weekend. Perhaps he decided to allow a dampening of the track before 30-odd small-block Ford-powered Cobras go out to add a little spice to the proceedings.

Hold up, it's Brian Redman – ex-works Porsche and Ferrari driver, F1 pilot, Targa Florio winner and the man known around the Autocar office as the greatest living Lancastrian. Redman has lived in Florida for decades, so he will be used to the odd shower. Still, let's see if he fancies a lift. "Oi, Mr Redman, need a cab, guv?"

I have been in a Vauxhall Victor FB estate before. There is a dim and distant memory of a mid-1960s picnic on the south coast, in the days before Isofix mountings and any thoughts of how safe children were in the car. But this is the first time I've driven one. I'm a taxi driver for the day, running VIPs and anyone good enough at blagging to cop a ride with Goodwood's taxi service. The Victor is a 1964 model with only 55,000 miles on the clock and has been in Vauxhall's historic collection for almost 20 years.


Every few minutes someone comes up to say they once owned a Victor or some other old Vauxhall. Actually, my first car was a Viva. With a 1500cc motor, the old Victor won't see 60mph in under half

a minute, but it's perfect for this job. Redman is certainly happy to shelter in it as we drive down to the assembly area, where he will slide into the seat of a Cobra. Last time I saw Redman, he had a broken arm. "Ah, yes," he remembers. "Rollerskating with my granddaughter. Had only just put them on and fell over backwards as I stood up." Redman, who also happens to be the greatest raconteur in historic racing, makes his way to the Cobra. Seventy-five years old and still damned fast.

A different sort of Knowledge to that famously learnt by London's black cab drivers is required for the Goodwood cabbie if he is to avoid embarrassment in front of a punter.

Hang a trout, there's a fare. Why, it's the 1970 Le Mans winner Richard Attwood. "Where to, guv?" I ask. "Wow, a Victor," says Attwood. "We used to have a Vauxhall agency." It turns out that Attwood's father was in the motor trade. "I wanted my father to take on a Volkswagen agency but he didn't listen to me."

As we head through the crowds to parc fermé, it dawns on me how much easier and safer it is to drive an old car, with its slim A-pillars and huge glass area, through a swarm of people than it would be a modern one in which the requirement to be able to see out has been largely forgotten by safety legislators and designers.

Anyhow, must go – there's an old bloke over there trying to hail a cab, and he looks a lot like Tony Brooks. 



Mint Victor belongs to Vauxhall's historic collection